

about him wonderingly and in dismay. Without knowing it, he had gone down to the large square in front of the Brandenburg Gate, where was a dense crowd.

But the thousands here did not utter sneers or praises—they were sad and silent; there was no malicious sparkle in their eyes as they rushed in one direction to the Brandenburg Gate.

The prince beheld an inclined scaffold erected near the lofty Grecian pillars of the gate, and reaching up to the cast-iron goddess of victory, standing in her triumphal car, and holding the reins of her horses. He saw the ropes, pulleys, and chains, attached to her form, and it seemed to him as if they were around his own breast, and choking his voice. He had to make an effort to utter a word, and, turning to a man standing by, he asked in a low voice, "What is going on here? What are they doing up there?"

The man looked at him long and mournfully. "The French are removing the 'Victoria' from the gate," he said, with suppressed anger. "They believe the state no longer suitable to Berlin, and the emperor is sending it to Paris, whither he has already forwarded the sword and clock of Frederick the Great."

The prince uttered a groan of despair. At that moment a loud French command was heard by the gate, and as if the "Victoria" were conscious, and obedient to the orders of the emperor, a tremor seemed to seize the goddess. She rose as the horses began to descend, and her figure bent forward as if greeting Berlin for the last time. A loud noise resounded above the heads of the crowd—the "Victoria" had glided safely to the ground. The prince uttered a cry, and, as if paralyzed, closed his eyes. When he opened them again the beautiful pillars of the Brandenburg Gate had been deprived of their ornament, and the "Victoria," with her triumphal horses, stood deposed from her lofty throne.

Prince Augustus raised his tearful eyes to heaven and whispered, "Oh, my brother, I envy you your death, for it was not permitted you to behold the humiliation and sorrow of Prussia!"

## BOOK II.

### CHAPTER XVI.

#### THE TREATY OF CHARLOTTENBURG.

QUEEN LOUISA was pacing her room in great excitement. At times she stood still at the window, and looked anxiously into the street as if expecting the arrival of some one. But that street—the main one in Osterode, in which city the royal couple had spent the last few days—remained silent and deserted. Large snow-flakes were falling from the cheerless, lead-colored sky, and the November storm was now sweeping them into little mounds, and again dispersing them in clouds of white dust. The queen beheld nothing but this winter scene; she sighed and returned to her room to pace it as rapidly as before.

But she was constantly drawn to the window, gazing into the street and listening breathlessly to any noise that reached her ears. "If he should not come," she muttered anxiously, "or if too late, all would be lost, and the cowards and babblers would be able once more to persuade my husband to yield to their clamor for peace. Heaven have mercy on our unhappy country and on ourselves!"

Suddenly she started up, and leaned closer to the window in order to see better. Yes, she had not been mistaken. In the lower part of the street a carriage was to be seen. The storm prevented her from hearing the noise of the wheels, but she saw it—it drew nearer and nearer, and finally stopped in front of the house. The queen stepped back, and, drawing a deep breath, she raised her eyes to heaven. "I thank Thee, my God! Thou hast had mercy on my anguish," she whispered with a gentle smile. She then walked slowly and faintly across the room toward the divan and sank down on it. "Ah," she muttered, "this eternal anxiety, this unrelieved suspense and excitement are consuming my strength—nay, my life. My feet are trembling; my heart stands en-

tirely still at times, and then beats again as violently as if it would burst from my breast. But, no matter! I am quite willing to die if I only live to see the deliverance of my country and the preservation of my house." She dropped her head on the cushions and gazed with dilated eyes at the sky. But, on hearing a low rap at the door, she slowly rose and called out in her full, sonorous voice, "Come in!" The door opened, and Madame von Berg entered.

"Well, Caroline, he has arrived, I suppose?" asked the queen.

"No, your majesty," said Madame von Berg, smiling, "they have arrived. The two ministers, Baron von Stein and Count von Hardenberg request your majesty to grant them an audience."

"Hardenberg!" exclaimed Louisa joyfully, and her pale face brightened. "Oh, let them come in—immediately!"

The queen quickly left the divan and walked toward the door. But Madame von Berg hastened to reach it before her and opened it. "Come in, gentlemen," she said; "her majesty is waiting for you!"

"Yes, I am waiting for you," exclaimed Louisa, meeting them, and with a sweet smile extending both her hands.

The ministers bowed and kissed her hand. Madame von Berg had in the mean time locked the door leading into the small anteroom, and withdrew softly by the opposite door.

"Then you received the message the king sent you?" asked the queen, turning toward Baron von Stein. "And you did not hesitate a moment to come here? And you, count," added she, turning toward Hardenberg, "you did the same as this faithful friend? Having heard that the decisive moment had come, you did not hesitate to offer your services to your king? Oh, I thank you, gentlemen; I thank you in the name of my husband, of my children, and of our country! In these days of danger and distress, when all are wavering and fearful, it does my heart good to meet with unswerving fealty and devotion. Ah, so many have proved faithless and deserted us!"

"But so many also have remained faithful, your majesty," said Hardenberg, "so many have proved true and loyal!"

The queen gazed at him long and mournfully. "Few," she said, "alas, very few! You say so only in your magnanimity, because you do not care to make your loyalty appear as something extraordinary. But, look around in Prussia—

look at our fortresses! Everywhere treachery and cowardice—everywhere perfidy! I will not speak to you of Stettin, of Küstrin, of Spandau, of Anclam, and Erfurt! You know already that we have lost them. But have you learned the dreadful tidings we received yesterday? Do you know that Magdeburg has surrendered?"

"Magdeburg!" ejaculated Stein and Hardenberg, at the same time.

Louisa nodded sadly, and her eyes filled with tears. "It was our last bulwark," she said, "and it is gone, too! I have wept much since yesterday. Now I will be calm, and force my grief back into my heart. But as Mary, Queen of England, said at the capture of Calais, 'If my heart were opened, you would find on it the name of *Magdeburg* in bloody letters!'"\*

"It is true," said Hardenberg, gloomily, "it is a great disaster. A fortress so well supplied with every thing, and a garrison of more than ten thousand men!"

"If your majesty will permit me, I ask, how did this intelligence impress the king?" said Baron von Stein.

"He bore it with resignation, and that calm courage which never leaves him in these days of affliction," said Louisa, quickly. "But his so-called friends and advisers, Messrs. von Haugwitz, Köckeritz, Voss, and Kalkreuth, received the heart-rending news with secret satisfaction. I read it in their faces, notwithstanding the sadness they assumed. They regard the fall of Magdeburg as an ally of their intentions and schemes. They desire peace with France—peace at any price—and hope that the king will now approve their views. Hence, Minister von Stein, Madame von Berg had to give a letter to the courier yesterday, in which I urged you to comply with the king's orders, and to come here immediately. Hence, Count von Hardenberg, I am glad that you have come too. Oh, I know very well what it must have cost your noble heart to come without being expressly requested; but you did so for the sake of the crushed and prostrate fatherland—I know it very well—and not for Prussia, not for us, but for Germany, on whose neck the tyrant has placed his foot, and which he will strangle unless the good and the brave unite their whole strength and hurl him off."

"I came here," said Hardenberg, "because I remembered that hour when your majesty permitted me to give an oath of

\* Louisa's own words.—Vide "Queen Louisa," p. 316.

unwavering fealty and devotion—that hour when you condescended to accept my hand for our league against France, and when you vowed to exert yourself to the best of your ability to maintain the policy Prussia had entered into, and not to suffer her king ever to accept the perfidious friendship of France!”

“I have never forgotten that hour,” said the queen, gravely. “He who joined us in taking that pledge at the solemn moment you refer to, Prince Louis Ferdinand, has sealed his vow with his death: he is sleeping on the field of honor. But I feel convinced that he is looking down on us from heaven; and, if it be given to the spirits of the blessed to influence the affairs of mortals, he will instil his ardor into our breast, and assist us in reaching the true goal. But what is that goal? and what the true way? My short-sighted eye is not able to discern it. When I behold the tremendous successes of the conqueror, I am perplexed, and ask myself whether it be not evident that God will make him master of the world, and whether, consequently, it be not in vain to struggle against him? Oh, my soul is at times engaged in terrible conflict with itself, and gloomy doubts frighten it. But I feel now that we are on the eve of the crisis, and that the present day will decide our whole future. Grand-Marshal Duroc will reach this city to-day; Colonel von Rauch, who preceded him, has already arrived. He delivered to the king the treaty of peace, which M. de Zastrow and Lucchesini concluded with Talleyrand at Charlottenburg. Napoleon has already signed it. Only the king’s signature is wanting, and, as soon as he affixes it, we are the friends and vassals of the emperor of France, and must either lay the sword aside, or, if he should command us to do so, draw it against Russia, our present ally. A stroke of the pen will determine the future of Prussia and the fate of my children. Now, help me and all of us!—now, advise me as to what ought to be done! Tell me your honest opinion as freely and sincerely as though you were standing before God! Count von Hardenberg, pray, speak first! Do you believe it to be necessary for the welfare of Prussia, of my children, and, above all, of my husband, that the king should approve the treaty?”

“Your majesty is aware that I never advised the king to form an alliance with France,” said Hardenberg, “and that my most sacred conviction will ever prevent me from doing so. But, in order to pass an opinion on the treaty of Charlot-

tenburg, I ought to know its provisions, and your majesty is aware that the king has not permitted me of late to take part in the negotiations. I do not know what the treaty contained.”

“Nor I either,” said Baron von Stein, when the queen turned toward him with an inquiring glance. “But I know those who concluded it; I know that M. de Lucchesini and M. de Zastrow believe no sacrifice, no humiliation too great, if they can thereby succeed in making peace with France. I know that Talleyrand is wily enough to profit by their weakness, their cowardice, and lack of true honor; and I know, finally, that if Napoleon signs a treaty of peace with Prussia now, it cannot but be advantageous to him, and humiliating to Prussia.”

“I will tell you what the treaty contains,” said a grave voice behind them.

“The king!” exclaimed Louisa, rising quickly and hastening to him.

He greeted her cordially, and gave her his hand. “I wished to see you in your cabinet,” he said, smiling, “and thus overheard the last words of the secret council which is held here.”

Louisa blushed slightly; the king noticed it, and shook his head a little. “It is quite agreeable to me,” he said, turning toward the two ministers, “that the queen informs herself of the state of our affairs and of politics generally, consulting men in whose loyalty and devotion she reposes confidence. We must know our fate accurately and thoroughly, in order to look it courageously in the face, and decide on such measures as are most conducive to our welfare. Moreover, the queen has hitherto bravely shared all our dangers and hardships; it is, therefore, but just that she should take part in our consultations.”

“Oh, my king and husband,” exclaimed Louisa pressing his hand against her bosom, “I thank you for your kindness and generosity. I thank you for not sending me back into the narrow sphere of woman; for permitting me to look beyond the threshold of my apartments, and to have a heart for the calamities of our country.”

The king nodded kindly to her, and then turned to the two ministers, who had respectfully withdrawn toward the door. “I invited you to come here, M. Minister von Stein,” he said, “that you might participate in a meeting of the cabinet,

at which our course in regard to the treaty of Charlottenburg is to be decided. I am glad that you have come. And," added he, addressing Hardenberg, "I am glad also that you are here. I like men who, conscious of their worth, are not irritated at being seemingly neglected. I know how to appreciate the fact that you are standing by us in these times of adversity, and not looking out only for your own quiet and comfort. I am fully aware that you are not pursuing this course from selfish motives, and that you are rich enough to live without any public position—richer, perhaps, than your king! Well, the queen requested you to give her your opinion about the treaty of Charlottenburg, and I came in and interrupted you."

"Your majesty heard that these gentlemen assured me they were ignorant of the contents of the treaty," said the queen, fixing her beaming eyes on the calm, grave face of her husband; "your majesty, on entering the room, were kind enough to say you would communicate the contents to us."

"I will do so, to keep the gentlemen posted," said the king—"not, however, as king, but as a friend, whom you, Louisa, will authorize to take part in the deliberations of this secret council of state. Hence, let us proceed without any regard to etiquette. I did not want to preside over, but merely to attend your consultation, and to tell you what you are ignorant of. Resume your seats, therefore."

"And you, dear husband!" asked the queen, sitting down again on the divan, "will you be so kind as to take a seat by my side?"

The king nodded, and sat down by her side, while the ministers took seats opposite. "Listen, then, to the terms of peace," said the king. "The Emperor Napoleon demands the whole territory situated on the right bank of the Vistula, from the point where the river enters the Prussian states, to its mouth. Besides, he demands the surrender of the fortresses of Kolberg, Hameln, Nienburg, Glogau, and Breslau; the cession of the whole of Silesia, on the right bank of the Oder, with the greater part of the section of this province lying on the left bank of that river. He, moreover, demands the city and fortress of Graudenz; he requires all the Prussian forces to withdraw to Königsberg and its environs, and that the Russian troops shall evacuate our states immediately. After all these conditions have been complied with in the most scrupulous manner, either side is to be at liberty to

resume hostilities ten days after giving due notice thereof."\*

The queen, no longer able to suppress her agitation, uttered a cry, and turned toward her husband with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes. "And what does he offer us in return for all these humiliations?" she asked. "How is he going to reward us for selling to him our provinces, our fortresses, and our honor?"

"In return," said the king, slowly, laying stress on every word—"in return, he holds out to us the prospect of marching soon as his ally against Russia, and of supporting the Ottoman Porte. A second note, which Talleyrand drew up in the name of his master, and communicated to our envoy, was added. This note stated that, inasmuch as France, owing to constantly renewed wars, as well as her allies, Spain and Holland, had lost their most flourishing colonies in Asia and in the West Indies, and were compelled, for the fourth time, to fight in their own defence, justice and reason authorized the emperor to seek compensations on this side of the seas for the losses he and his allies had suffered, and to look for these compensations in those countries which, by virtue of his victories, he had the power to dispose of in such a manner as he deemed best. The greatest evil which Prussia had brought about by the last war, for which she alone was responsible, was the fact that the Ottoman Porte had been deprived thereby of its independence; for, owing to the insulting and threatening demands of the Emperor of Russia, two princes, who had been justly banished from the possessions of the Sultan, had been placed at the head of the government of the Danubian principalities, so that Moldavia and Wallachia were at present nothing else than Russian provinces. 'Accordingly,' concludes Talleyrand's note, 'so long as the Sultan should not have recovered the legitimate sovereignty over these provinces, the emperor would not consent to give up any countries which the fortune of war had placed in his hands, or which he might conquer hereafter.'"

"That is to say," exclaimed the queen, passionately, "that Napoleon declares war against Russia, and, if we make peace with him, we must take up arms against that empire."

"That will be inevitable," said the king, composedly. "Besides this note, Talleyrand communicated some important

\* Vide "Prussia in the Years 1806 and 1807"—a Diary, by H. v. Schladen, p. 57.  
 † "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. ix., p. 341.

information to our ambassadors. He told them that Napoleon, before setting out from Berlin, would issue a decree, absolutely prohibiting all commerce with England, and ordering, further, that all letters coming from or going to that country, addressed to an Englishman, or written in English, were to be stopped at the post-office; that all goods, the produce of English manufactures, or of English colonies, were to be confiscated, not only on the coast, but in the interior, in the houses of the merchants by whom they should be retained; that every vessel, having only touched at the English colonies, or at any of the ports of the three kingdoms, should be forbidden to enter French ports, or ports under subjection to France, and that every Englishman whatsoever, seized in France, or in the countries under subjection to her arms, should be declared a prisoner of war.\* Now," added he, in a subdued tone, "I have finished my communication. You know the treaty of peace, and every thing belonging to it. You will be able to form a definite opinion with regard to it; you can, accordingly, fulfil the queen's wish, and tell her whether you would advise me to sign it. Speak! and remember that here, in this room, I am not the king, but only the queen's friend, happening to be present at your consultation. It, therefore, behoves me to be silent, and to listen."

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE SECRET COUNCIL OF STATE.

THE king leaned back, and, supporting his head on his arms, shaded his face with his hands, as if it were a screen that was to conceal the expression of his features. The queen turned with a sweet smile toward the two gentlemen. "My husband having permitted it," she said, "pray, speak. Let me hear your views. And as I deem the opinions of both of you equally important, I do not know whom to request to commence. Let the oldest speak first."

"Then, your majesty, I must speak," said Hardenberg, bowing low, "I know that I am seven years older than Baron von Stein. He surpasses me in wisdom as I do him in years."

\* Thiers, "Consulat et Empire," vol. vii., p. 380.

"Well, speak," said Louisa. "What do you think of this treaty?"

"I think it is a new proof of the reckless pride of Bonaparte," said Hardenberg. "In order to appreciate it correctly it is necessary for us to look back into the past, and to remember how this war arose, which the emperor asserts to have been provoked by Prussia. But the king, our most gracious master, never desired war; on the contrary, he withstood, for a long while, the wishes of his ministers, his court, his people, and his army. He would have avoided the war, if Napoleon had allowed him to form a Confederation of the North, conservative in its tendencies, but not hostile to the Confederation of the Rhine. Deceived, menaced, insulted, the king continued negotiating to the last moment, and did not cease hoping that France would acknowledge that she was wrong, and yield to the remonstrances and wishes of Prussia. The king was arming, it is true, but only for the purpose of supporting his just and strictly pacific demands by such a military demonstration. Compelled by Napoleon, he had to obey the dictates of honor at last and draw his sword. The fortunes of war decided against him; he was defeated. He commenced negotiating again; for the sake of the welfare of his people he submitted to the most rigorous terms which the conqueror imposed on him; but Napoleon, instead of appreciating this, became only the more arrogant and insatiable in his demands. The king's willingness to accept those terms was of no avail; the conditions which had been imposed on him were repudiated and nullified. Every new triumph, every new capitulation of a fortress, caused the emperor to render his demands more rigorous; and he dares now to offer a treaty, which would reduce the kingdom of Prussia to a single province—which could not but render the king's position even more precarious, and would be the depth of humiliation, without offering the least prospect of a speedy and lasting recovery from our past disasters. If Prussia should accept this utterly illusory compact, she would thereby deliver herself completely into the hands of an insatiable enemy, whose ambitious schemes are well known, and deprive herself of the only support still remaining. She would betray Russia and not save herself by this treachery, but only accelerate her own utter ruin. No one can dare to advise the king to sign such a paper, and, least of all, myself, after constantly opposing an alliance with France, even at a time when it would seem—